

Decor on a Dime

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Want to change the look of your home without having to buy a new furniture set or embarking on major reconstruction? Interior stylist Natasha Arora tells us how to revamp our decor on a dime.



[Natasha Arora Styling](#) offers what the owner calls interior styling: a quick makeover – sometimes lasting only a day – designed to improve the aesthetic, atmospheric and ergonomic aspects of a room. Although her advice does require a certain open-mindedness, it's disarmingly simple. She has implemented all of the following suggestions in her clients' homes, varying them to suit each person's personality and budget.

1. Take time to clean

First of all, spend some quality time with the duster, vacuum cleaner or polishing cloth. This alone will make a room look brighter and fresher than it did before. Any piece of furniture – couch, bookcase, coffee table – and even accessories reveal their hidden potential when they're clean.

2. Make some space

Next, the expert suggests we identify any furniture or objects that are no longer useful or appealing and remove them from the room. This exercise often makes us realize how much more a certain item can be appreciated once it is placed in another part of the home.



3. Get organized

We tend to respond positively to groups of similar objects. Arrange your books by size or group vases of similar colour, material or style together for a pleasing visual experience.

4. Let the sun shine in

Rather than placing lamps in the dark corners of a room, Arora recommends we focus on sources of natural light. We should open curtains wide and move furniture to allow as much sunshine as possible into our homes from windows, skylights and French doors.

5. Create single-function rooms

Through laziness or lack of space, we can fall into the habit of using rooms for many different purposes. The expert suggests that, by limiting each room to a single purpose, our environment actually becomes more functional. She offers this anecdote as proof: "I worked on the living room of a client, in the house he shared with his daughter. The room had been a multi-functional mess, but after I finished, the daughter no longer felt embarrassed to have friends over. The room was now an inviting and practical space that reflected her and her father's personalities."



“Be yourself in your own home. You don’t have to slavishly follow all the decorating trends; in fact, your decor should reflect who you are. That should be the motto of your new and improved interior style.”



6. Look in the basement, the garage . . . or even the backyard! “This is often where I find the most interesting items: benches, stools, lamps, lampshades, and so on,” the stylist confides. The front or back yard often also contains garden furniture or outdoor planters that can become the focal point of a room. Re-covering an old lampshade or repainting a shabby piece of furniture is a great

way to create a signature piece at a bargain-basement price.

7. Buy fresh flowers

“Get rid of dried or silk flowers that gather dust; make way for fresh flowers!” Flowers are the ultimate all-natural home decor accessory. They have the ability to instantly brighten up a dark space with a blaze of low-cost colour.

8. Go crazy with candles

Instantly create a warm, inviting atmosphere by buying a bunch of unscented candles in neutral colours and distributing them throughout the house.

9. Exchange decor items with friends

“One man’s junk is another man’s treasure,” as people often say. You will quickly realize the truth behind this saying if you ever host or attend a decor exchange evening. You will be amazed at how the unwanted stuff your friends bring can shine in another setting.

10. Hunt for bargains all year long

To maintain a cache of low-cost decor accessories, Arora suggests we constantly stay on bargain alert, keeping our eyes peeled for items we can use to seasonally update our decor. Here are a few hints:

- **vases:** get them in all possible sizes and colours
- **frames:** collect them also in many different sizes and colours, for displaying pictures of your recent trips or favourite people
- **sheets:** change the colour every season and adapt the material to the weather
- **throws:** use for sofas and beds; in cotton or cashmere, plain or plaid, dare to vary materials and textures
- **cushion covers:** transform your cushions in an instant just by changing the covers. You can vary the patterns, materials and textures depending on the season or the current trend

“If you invest in only one decor item, make it paint,” suggests our expert. It can instantly transform a room. “But beginners beware: Choosing the right colour is an art, and the result also depends on factors



such as the finish (mat, gloss, semi-gloss, etc.), how well it is applied and the lighting in the room.” When in doubt, Arora recommends hiring a specialist...like her!